

**REMARKS**

In the June 1, 2007 Office Action, claims 1, 2 and 8 stand rejected in view of prior art. On the other hand, claims 3-7 and 9-22 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. No other objections or rejections were made in the Office Action. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application.

***Status of Claims and Amendments***

In response to the June 1, 2007 Office Action, Applicant has amended the claims 1, 3, 7 and 9, and added new claims 23-27 as indicated above. Thus, claims 1-22 are pending, with claims 1, 3, 7, 9, 24 and 26 being the only independent claims. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following comments.

***Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103***

In paragraphs 1-2 of the Office Action, claims 1, 2 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 8-26174 (Nagase) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,276,230 (Crum). In response, Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to more clearly define the present invention.

More specifically, independent claim 1 now requires the operating member being axially arranged relative to the handlebar mounting portion such that the operating member does not axially overlap the free end of the handlebar when the handlebar mounting portion is fixedly mounted in the free end of the handlebar as viewed in a direction perpendicular to the axial direction. Clearly this arrangement is *not* disclosed or suggested by the Nagase publication, the Crum patent or any other prior art of record.

Specifically, in the Nagase publication, the so-called operating member 19 is mounted on the bar 7 in an axially overlapping arrangement. Likewise, the Crum patent fails to disclose or suggest such an arrangement of a movable operating member that does not axially overlap the handlebar. Thus, even if these references were combined as suggested in the Office Action, the hypothetical device created by such a hypothetical combination would not include all of the features of independent claim 1, as now amended. Accordingly, withdrawal

of this rejection of independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 2 and 8 is respectfully requested.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

In paragraph 3 of the Office Action, claims 3-7 and 9-22 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application. In response, Applicant has amended claims 3, 7 and 9 to place them in independent form. Thus, claims 3-7 and 9-22 are believed to be allowable.

***New Claims***

Applicant has added new claims 23-27 by the current Amendment.

New claim 23 depends from claim 1, and thus, is believed to be allowable for the same reasons as claim 1. Also, claim 23 requires a handlebar mounting portion that has a support base with a contact surface arranged and configured to contact a free end edge of the free end of the handlebar when the handlebar mounting portion is fixedly mounted in the free end of the handlebar, and the operating member being axially spaced from the contact surface, which is not believed to be disclosed or suggested in the prior art.

New independent claim 24 is similar to original claim 1, but requires an electrical shift control switch portion having an electrical wire opening having an electrical wire extending therefrom, the electrical wire opening extending in a direction parallel to the center axis of the free end of the handlebar such that the electrical wire can be routed along the handlebar. This arrangement is not believed to be disclosed or suggested in the prior art.

New claim 25 depends from claim 24 and thus, is believed to be allowable for the same reasons as claim 24. Also, claim 25 requires an electrical wire opening is arranged externally of an outer surface of the free end of the handlebar when the handlebar mounting portion is fixedly mounted in the free end of the handlebar to route the electrical wire along an external surface of the free end of the handlebar, which is not believed to be disclosed or suggested in the prior art.

New independent claim 26 is similar to original claim 1, but requires an operating member having an arc-shaped operating surface that extends circumferentially partially about

the center axis when the handlebar mounting portion is fixedly mounted in the free end of the handlebar. This arrangement is not believed to be disclosed or suggested in the prior art.

New claim 27 depends from claim 26 and thus, is believed to be allowable for the same reasons as claim 26. Also, claim 27 requires an arc-shaped operating surface that extends circumferentially less than one-hundred-eighty degrees about the center axis when the handlebar mounting portion is fixedly mounted in the free end of the handlebar, which is not believed to be disclosed or suggested in the prior art.

***Prior Art Citation - Conclusion***

In the Office Action, additional prior art references were made of record. Applicant believes that these references do not render the claimed invention obvious.

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In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 1-27 are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested. If there are any questions regarding this Amendment, please feel free to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



Patrick A. Hilsmier  
Reg. No. 46,034

SHINJYU GLOBAL IP COUNSELORS, LLP  
1233 Twentieth Street, NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202)-293-0444

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